

REMARKS

I. Introduction

With the cancellation herein without prejudice of claims 11, 13 and 15 and the addition of new claims 23 and 24, claims 12, 14 and 16 to 24 are pending in the present application. In view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, it is respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable, and reconsideration is respectfully requested.

As an initial matter, it is noted that the Office Action Summary does not include an acknowledgment of the claim for foreign priority and does not indicate whether all copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received from the International Bureau. A claim of priority to German Application No. 102 07 466.6 was made, inter alia, in the "Combined Declaration and Power of Attorney for Patent Application," submitted, unsigned, on August 23, 2004. A fully executed copy of the "Combined Declaration and Power of Attorney for Patent Application" is submitted herewith. At least the "Notice of Acceptance of Application Under 35 U.S.C. 371 and 37 CFR 1.495" dated January 27, 2005 indicates receipt of the priority document by the Office. Applicant therefore respectfully requests acknowledgment of the claim for foreign priority and an acknowledgment of receipt of the certified copy of the priority document in the next Office communication.

Applicant thanks the Examiner for considering the previously filed Information Disclosure Statement, PTO-1449 paper and cited references.

II. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant notes with appreciation the indication of allowable subject matter included in claims 17 to 20. In this regard, the Examiner will note that each of claims 17 and 20 has been rewritten herein in independent form to include all of the features of its respective base claim and any intervening claims. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claims 17 and 20 are in condition for immediate allowance.

Claims 18 and 19 ultimately depend from claim 17 and are therefore also believed to be in condition for immediate allowance.

Claims 12, 14 and 16 have been amended herein without prejudice to depend from claim 17 and are therefore also believed to be in condition for immediate allowance.

Claims 21 and 22 have been amended herein without prejudice to include features analogous to features included in claim 17. As such, it is respectfully submitted that claims 21 and 22 are in condition for immediate allowance.

III. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a)

While Applicant does not necessarily agree with any of the rejections made under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a), to facilitate matters, claims 11, 13 and 15 have been canceled herein without prejudice, claims 12, 14 and 16 have been amended herein without prejudice to depend from claim 17, which was indicated to include allowable subject matter, and claims 21 and 22 have been amended herein without prejudice to include features analogous to features included in claim 17. As such, it is respectfully submitted that all rejections raised under 35 U.S.C. §§ 102(b) and 103(a) are moot, and withdrawal of these rejections is respectfully requested.

IV. New Claims 23 and 24

New claims 23 and 24 have been added herein. It is respectfully submitted that claims 23 and 24 add no new matter and are fully supported by the present application, including the Specification. Since claims 23 and 24 include features analogous to features included in claim 20, it is respectfully submitted that claims 23 and 24 are patentable over the references relied upon for at least the same reasons that claim 20 was indicated to include allowable subject matter.

V. Conclusion

It is therefore respectfully submitted that all of the presently pending claims are allowable. All issues raised by the Examiner having been addressed, an early and favorable action on the merits is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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